(c) if so, the facts thereof and whether Government has proposed to take up the matter with the tourism department of foreign countries and encourage them to visit India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and steps taken by Government to promote tourists of foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (c) Various Countries have been issuing Travel advisories from time to time, advising their citizens to avoid travel or to take precautions while traveling to areas in the country which are temporarily disturbed. The Ministry of Tourism through its overseas offices and in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian missions abroad takes up the matter regarding lifting of travel advisories as and when issued by different countries to avoid any adverse impact on tourism to the country.

(d) The Ministry of Tourism has taken several steps to counter the downward trend of inbound tourism and to promote tourism to the country. These include liberalizing the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme for service providers promoting India, organizing Road Shows in important tourist generating markets overseas, arranging familiarisation tours to India for international travel trade and media representatives to keep them updated on safety/security conditions in the country, media campaigns in the print, electronic, online and outdoor media and a "Visit India 2009" scheme, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India. Recently Government of India has decided to introduce Visa-on-Arrival scheme for tourists from five countries viz. Singapore, Finland, New Zealand, Luxembourg and Japan on a pilot basis for a period of one year.

Decline in number of foreign tourists

†3192. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in the number of foreign tourists after terrorist attack in a number of metros in the country especially in Jaipur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government is having any dialogue with Government of other countries in this regard or any such effort is being made to instill faith in foreign tourists to visit India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): (a) and (b) The number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India increased by 5.6% in 2008 over 2007. However, during January - November 2009, a decline of 6.3% in FTAs has been observed over the corresponding period of 2008. This decline may be due to various reasons including global financial slowdown, terrorist activities, H1N1 pandemic, etc.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and through its overseas offices and Indian missions abroad, takes up the matter regarding lifting of travel advisories as and when issued by different countries to avoid any adverse impact on tourism in the country.

In addition, to increase the number of FTAs in India, Ministry of Tourism is undertaking a series of promotional activities through its Indiatourism offices overseas. These activities include advertising, participation in travel fairs, exhibitions, road shows, India evenings, seminars & workshops, Indian food and cultural festivals, publication of brochures, inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

Tourism projects for Hyderabad and Secunderabad

3193. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has approached her Ministry for the tourism projects to be taken up in the Eleventh Five Year Plan for Secunderabad and Hyderabad twin cities which possess rich heritage and culture which has already completed 400 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and action taken so far; and

(c) if not, by when action would be taken on such important issues in Andhra Pradesh to promote the tourism to generate more revenue in the southern region?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations themselves. However, Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance for tourism projects, identified in consultation and interaction with them, subject to availability of funds and inter-se-priority under various schemes of the Ministry.

Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects worth Rs. 15675.91 lakh during the 11th Plan for the integrated development of tourism in the State of Andhra Pradesh which also includes a project for Development of Charminar Area of Hyderabad sanctioned in year 2007-08 for Rs.994.75 lakh.

5 Star hotel and health resorts in Himachal Pradesh

3194. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government considers for inviting private sector for setting up of five-star hotels and health resorts to promote tourism in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government proposes to hand over some of its properties in Himachal Pradesh to the private sector as part of its disinvestment plans; and